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The call of untrodden ways

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# THE CALL OF UNTRODDEN WAYS





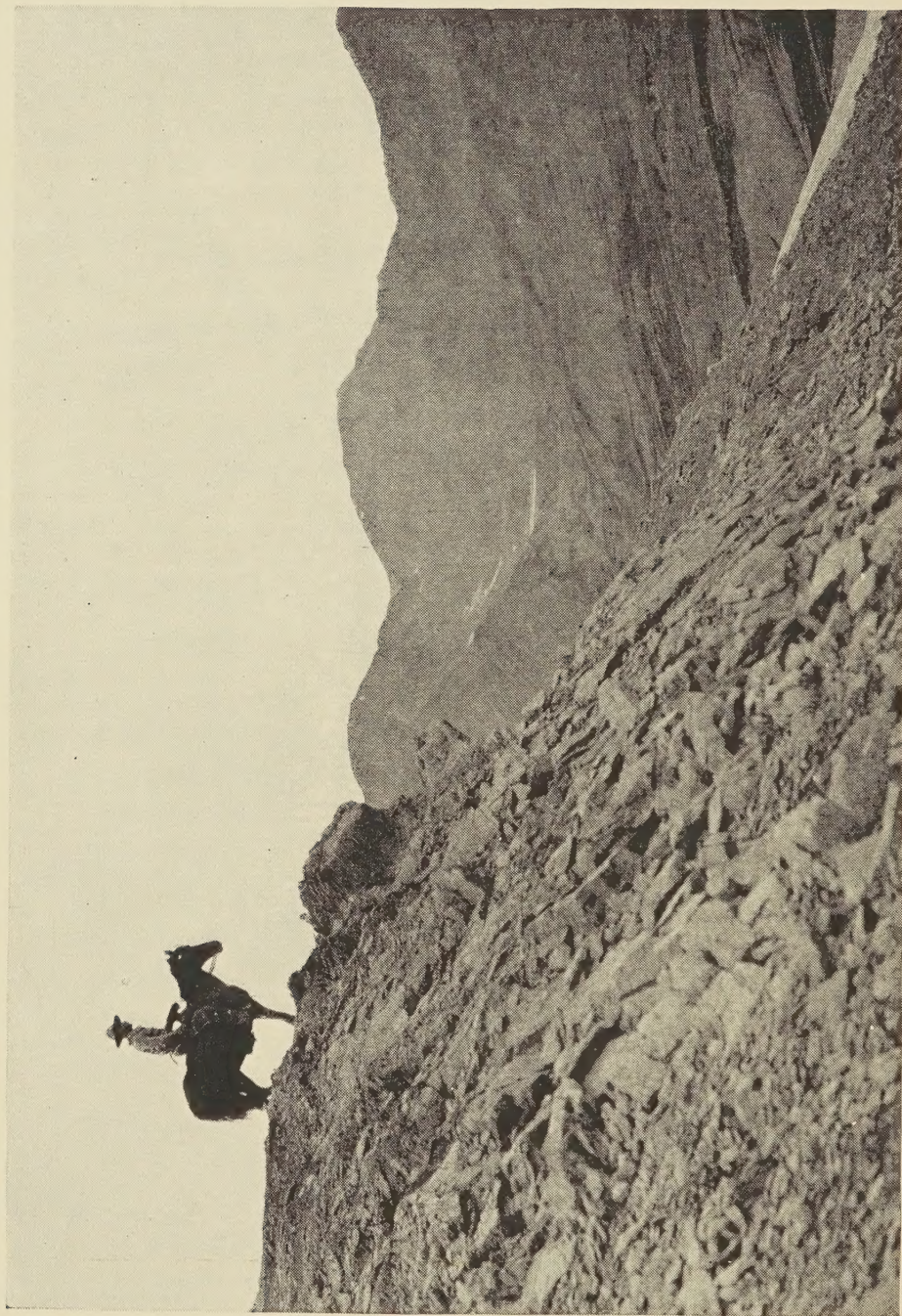
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## DEPARTMENT OF THE INTERIOR

HON. CHAS. STEWART	- - - -	<i>Minister</i>
W. W. CORY	- - - -	<i>Deputy Minister</i>
J. B. HARKIN	- -	<i>Commissioner of Canadian National Parks</i>



### On Shovel Pass

"Victor at last, throned on the cragged height,  
I scan the rough steep of the mountain side."

# THE CALL OF UNTRODDEN WAYS



OTTAWA

F. A. ACLAND

PRINTER TO THE KING'S MOST EXCELLENT MAJESTY

1925

Yea, it beomes a man  
To cherish memory, where he had delight.  
—*Sophocles.*

**I**N the summer of 1923 a well-known Canadian made his first visit to the Canadian Rockies and to Jasper National park. After several months in the mountains he came back inspired with a vision of the glorious possibilities for rest and recreation to be found in these lovely regions and with the desire to write something that would inform those Canadians who have not visited the Rockies of the value of their incomparable heritage.

This little monograph, written by him and published by the Canadian National Parks Branch of the Department of the Interior, is his effort to record and share "the debt of joy" accumulated among the untrodden ways of the Canadian National Parks.





## The Call of Untrodden Ways

"Something hidden. Go and find it. Go and look behind the ranges.—Something lost behind the ranges. Lost and waiting for you. Go!"



THE man who has stood amidst the solitudes and immensities of the untracked mountains knows the meaning of that call. There is a lure in the unknown and there is something in the heart of every man which, if it be shaken free from the trammels of the city, will set his feet upon the trail to know "the glory of going on." It belongs to the treasures of the mighty inheritance of the Canadian people that there are within our borders untravelled regions which await our coming and our claiming. There are the Canadian Rockies whose fringes we know but whose far spaces, unvisited of man, offer to every Canadian the thrill of discovery—the sense of conquest which led the adventurers of other days on and ever on. There is an old and cynical word of Roman days which says "Count no man happy until he is dead." Better were it to say to the people of this Dominion—"Count no Canadian truly happy, reckon him not as one who knows his native land until he has stood among our peerless mountains and felt the spell of their greatness."

Among these glorious ranges the government has established a series of National parks where Canadian people may see river, forest, mountain and valley unspoiled by civilization, and where generations yet to be may know something of the beauty and marvel of the land which is our heritage. Each year more Canadians are coming to



Lower end of Maligne Lake

**"N**O sound of living breaks upon my ear,  
No strain of thought, no reckless human will—  
Only the virgin quiet everywhere—  
Earth never seemed so far, or heaven so near."

realize the unrivalled beauties of their own land but there are many who still do not know the unclaimed glories that lie at our very doors.

But it will be said—"the beauty is so inaccessible; the Rockies are beyond our reach." Man! they are at your door, so to speak. The "National" line is your link with the West. Its motto is "the Service of the Canadian people"; its transportation facilities both as to speed and comfort are unsurpassed on this continent. No. 1, The Continental Limited, is waiting to translate into reality the dream which lies in a thousand hearts, caught in the old phrase "Westward Ho!"

For thousands of years the children have played the fascinating game of "Let's Suppose." Well! "Let's Suppose" that the great day has come and a man has left behind him, with a sense of unspeakable relief, the harassing and insistent claims of his office. Every hour he is being borne nearer the ramparts of the Rockies. What

awaits him beyond that blue line already in the dim distance? In the stillness of a summer night, while all about the prairies are mantled in darkness, the train pulls out from Edmonton and turns southwest to the gateway of the hills.

\* \* \*

It is morning—such a morning as one sees only in the mountains, where the air seems purer and the light fairer because they come over the eternal snows. The train is rushing through a steep defile, waking the echoes with its roar, and yet not able to drown the deeper voice of the angry Athabaska which foams and frets with its tawny flood towards the Arctic sea. The first sight of these mountains is perhaps not uplifting—perhaps even a little disappointing. One looks for the glories of snow-capped peaks against the blue, and instead one sees the menacing steel grey precipices of Roche Miette Range.



Wild Deer



Snake Indian Falls

They are barren of all vegetation—a desolation of primeval rock hewn into rugged towers and bastions like some ancient “keep” of medieval days.

And in truth these stern hills are the keepers of the ways; behind their far flung ramparts there lies a secret, and the secret is Jasper the Beautiful. There it lies, deep set amid the encircling heights, bejewelled with lakes, girt by mighty forests—Jasper the altogether lovely! Yet, as one draws near, it is not the sweep of the valley nor the sheen of the lakes that chiefly claims the eye—but the surpassing splen-



Mt. Edith Cavell

"Whoso takes the world's life on him and his own lays down,  
He, dying so, 'livea.'"



Jasper Lodge



Caribou Valley

"Blue of a burning boundless sky,  
Gold of a boundless splendid sod;  
Prodigal noontide, far and nigh,  
Blue and gold on the plains of God."

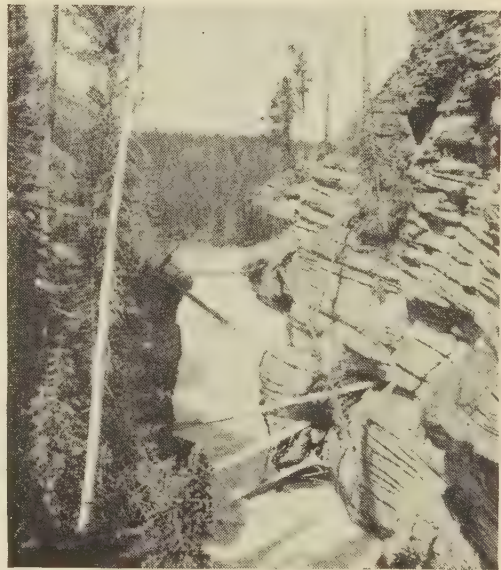
dour of Mount Edith Cavell, the everlasting memorial of a spirit that cannot die. As one looks towards its unsullied purity, its passionless calm, one remembers the last words of her whose martyrdom it commemorates, "Standing before God and Eternity, there must be no bitterness." In truth there is healing for mind and body in the presence of such beauty.



Arrived at Jasper, alternative delights confront a man. Which he will choose depends on

his temperament and his time. If for him it is a matter of a few days only; if he be of the disposition which delights to receive impressions rather than strenuously to seek them; if nature has designed him on lines not suited for climbing—then he had best betake himself to The Lodge, which is unique among all our hotels in structure and decoration and behind none of them in comfort. From the Lodge the traveller has access to the whole Kingdom of Beauty which is Jasper park. There are any number of trips to be taken—on foot, on horseback, or by motor, and every one of them reveals new glories of mountain and ravine, new and unimagined colours upon the changeful faces of the lakes; new cadences in glacier born stream and river singing among boulders or shouting at the falls.

But if our traveller has the time to give—the heart to go, and the frame to endure, there is another and a greater joy for him, for Jasper is only the gateway to adventure.



Athabaska Canyon



Mt. Erebus, near Chrome Lake

"In the awed silence of this dim high place  
One keeping vigil might not fear indeed,  
If it befell him as that man of old  
Who in the mountain met God face to face."

There is something in the heart of a man which stirs with longing to be up and away—

“And there’s no end of voyaging when once the voice is heard,  
For the river calls and the road calls, and oh! the call of a bird!”

And the thing is possible. You can go and know in your experience the thrill of the quest and the rapture of discovery. In Jasper itself are men skilled in the ways of the wilds; ready to equip and mount you and your party for the trails that are calling. Let a man commit himself to the venture and there await him the greatest days of his life.



“Here shall the wizard moon ascend  
The heavens, in the crimson end  
Of day’s declining splendor.”



Black Bear

**F**IVE o'clock on a summer morning! The clouds are lifting from the scowling front of Mount Fitzwilliam, and the promise of a fair day is writ on the face of the skies; down at the corrals the packers are vigorously and vocally at work cinching the saddles to the accompaniment of dolorous groans from the wise old cayuse. Next the loads, tents, bedrolls, grub—all the paraphernalia of a camp. Then the baffling and impenetrable mystery of "the diamond hitch," and the train is ready; your train—ten



"Ten stout and agile ponies, full of original sin."



### Tonquin Valley and Amethyst Lakes

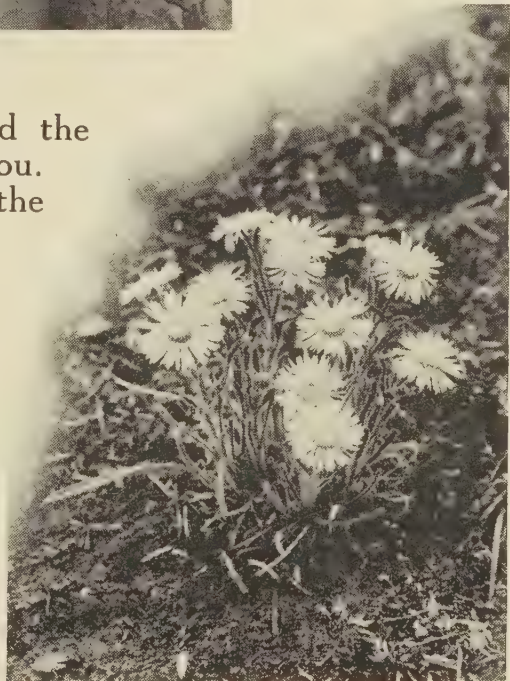
"Rain in a quick shower has beat down mist,  
And clouds float white in the sun like broods of swans."



Maligne Canyon

stout and agile mountain ponies, full of original sin but ready to tackle anything from a river in flood to a precipice trail. Whither away? Anywhere! that's the best of it. You can set your mind "on the distant summits of glory" and swing out on the trail, your own master. You will pitch your tent by a brawling stream tonight, and tomorrow it will be the silence

of an Alpine meadow and the stars looking down on you. Oh! no man truly knows the spell of the mountains until he has turned his back on the tourist ways; left the hotels and the parlour cars; cast aside the very habiliments of convention; has mounted his horse and gone out to seek for himself the secret which from of old has been locked in the silence of far spaces.





"Vistas of distance break upon my sight  
Where new peaks gather substance less and dim,  
As half remembered dreams at noon time light."



"A tower  
That from its wet foundation to its crown of  
glittering glass stands in the sweep of winds  
immovable, immortal, eminent."

**F**IVE o'clock on a summer eve, and the end of a perfect day! Our camp is pitched on a bench of green where the weary horses, freed from the irk of their loads, are standing knee-deep in wild pea vine; above us, 3,000 feet, is a field of ice; at our feet the river talks like a garrulous old man "of old unhappy, far-off things and battles long ago." It is strangely quiet; there is an eerie silence among the mountains for singing birds are few and the wild things make no sound, save that impudent policeman of the heights—the Whistler—who blows his long shrill blasts to let his little kingdom know an invader has set foot upon it. The bell of the old leader tinkles musically round the bend and dies

away. The wind has ceased talking to the pines. It is unutterably still. Suddenly, with a roar that starts a thousand echoes and brings a man's heart to his throat, a wall of ice on the heights above—loosened by the soft insistent beating of the sun through a long summer day—breaks from the glacier face and plunges to the depths. It is one of the most awesome and menacing tumults of nature. Long after the last crashing ton has found its resting place, the myriad broken fragments rumble and mutter in their uneasy passage; then once again silence, unbroken, profound. The last long streamers of light from the vanished sun are tinting the radiant peaks with soft ethereal dyes; one by one the stars come out; even



"The waterfall  
Which ever sounds and shines  
A pillar of white light upon the wall of  
purple cliffs."

has "lit her glimmering tapers round the day's dead sanctities" and—

"The darkening air  
Thrills with a sense of the triumphing night;  
Night with her train of stars  
And her great gift of sleep."

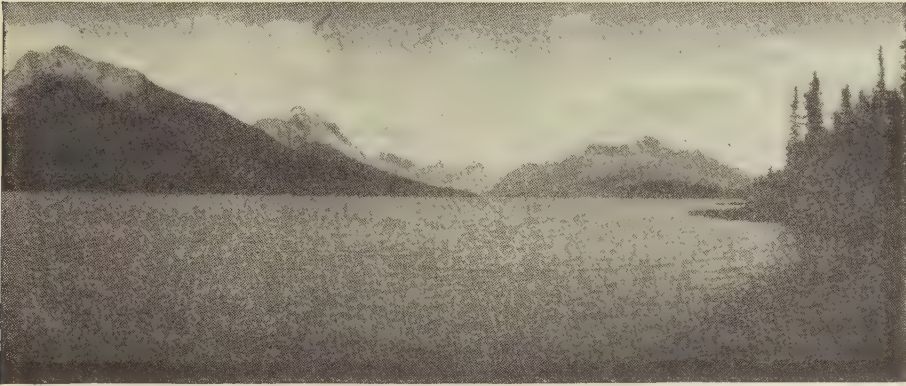
Then if a man be wise he will take that "great gift" and seek his fragrant bed of spruce to sleep as he has not for many a long day.



"Each affluent petal outstretched and uncurled  
To the glory and gladness and shine of the world."

**"BREAKFAST!"** Into the blessed peace of sleep breaks the voice of the cook. It is an unlovely and unwelcome sound, for a bed of spruce is nature's own mattress, and not lightly to be given up. But the sun is aloft; the world is waiting; and, after all, the gentle sizzle of bacon and the aroma of coffee—these are seductive things which a man on a holiday cannot resist. One glance from the tent door and bed is out of mind. It is a sheer joy to be alive. The morning is cloudless. Only the slowly rising mists, vague floating veils of grey, speak of the newly departed night. Day has unfurled her banners of light on the great peaks

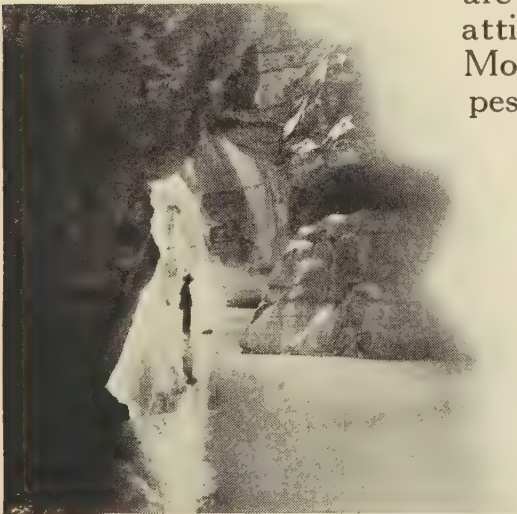
and the sun rises triumphantly to flood the earth with glory. The very river seems to have wakened from sleep and rushes arrogantly upon the stolid boulders.



Maligne Lake

How about a swim? "You haven't the nerve"—for remember this is no city water piped from a lake with the sun on it. Straight from the glacier comes this flood, cold with the deathly chill of age-old ice. Still, if the exuberance of the morning has fired a man's courage he may go in—with a gasp—and come out with a rush—tingling from head to foot, secretly elated at his own hardihood and prepared thereafter to smile in a superior way when some city dweller talks about a cold bath.

Nine o'clock! and time to take the trail. The horses are up, humped in melancholy attitudes within the rope corral. Mountain ponies are confirmed pessimists when it comes to packing up, but once saddled and loaded they settle down to go through with it till the evening halt brings liberty again. Here a word to the wise! While the packers are loading up, take you the trail on foot and strike out ahead. It is an experience not to be forgotten to be absolutely



Entrance to Maligne Canyon in Winter

alone among mountain solitudes—you and your friend. You climb slowly, pantingly, to the crest of some shoulder, there to look out on vast unpeopled spaces; rank upon rank in serried rugged array the mountains front you; innumerable nameless peaks. Far below the river foams through a sunless canyon; above you the sheer wall of rock rises to meet the glacier which crowns the height, a thing of dazzling iridescent beauty, and at your



"It is a country of the sun,  
Full of forgotten yesterdays,  
Where time takes summer in his care,  
And fills the distance of her gaze."

feet—the flowers. An alpine meadow in summer is a treasure house of beauty. It seems as if the guardian spirits of the mountains had lavished upon these high and hidden gardens all their care. Here are the giant Dog Tooth violets—golden people—kinsfolk of the sun; there the mountain Anenomes and their cousins, the Dryas family, turn their white chalices to the blue above. Next, in great companies of vivid blue, the Larkspur and the Lupin surmount the little people of this rich kingdom, while everywhere the vivid eyes of the Forget-Me-Not look up at you. Roses, Carnations, Tulips and Hollyhocks



Snake Indian Canyon and Falls



Outlet of Twin Tree Lake

—they have their rich beauty, they are all gallant and gay, but there is a witchery about the Queens and Princesses of the mountain gardens and all their radiant retinue of blossoms not seen in the statelier company of man's up-bringing.

Reluctantly you turn your back on the secluded loveliness of this green and happy garden and address yourself to the steep descent. It is not so easy as it looks, indeed it is harder than going up, and if the "pitch" be long,



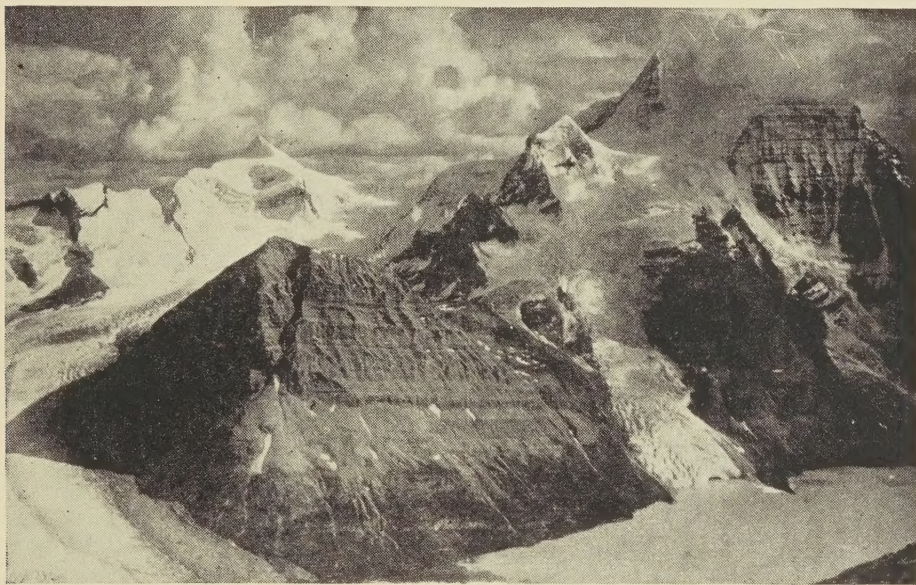
Between Little Shovel and Shovel Passes

knees will ache and thigh muscles inarticulately protest ere you stand on level ground again. So the day wears slowly through. Every hour has its new wonder and delight. The journeying sun, the wilful hurrying clouds, the lights and shadows transfigure and transform the landscape so that it is never the same, but a thing of changing beauty. Towards evening an advancing, menacing bank of cloud in the west brings presage of rain. slowly, inexorably the dark battalions draw near, the high steadfast line of distant summits is blotted out. The world grows murky beneath that ominous sky; now a vanguard of swirling storm clouds like soundless wraiths closes in upon the nearer peaks. One can almost imagine that the invisible sentries of the heights are "standing to" before the "alarm" of coming storm and—

"Ever and anon a trumpet sounds  
From the hid battlements of eternity;  
Those shaken mists a space, unsettled, then,  
Round the half glimpsed turrets slowly wash again."

It is a case of all speed now, if you are not to spend a damp, unhappy night under soaking canvas set upon spongy ground. The train is coming up on the run. "Here's the

place, this pine grove on the right. Dump the stuff there." A half hour of feverish activity and much strong speech and the camp is up. Not a moment too soon! With a sullen roar the wind sweeps down from the heights and hard upon its heels the rain in lashing sheets. What



Mt. Robson

"Above me in its granite majesty  
Sphinx-like the peak thru silent centuries  
Met the eternal question of the sky."

matter? The tents are tight and the beds are dry. There are worse places than a snug camp under the great pines when the Storm King is abroad and the giant branches give a voice to the shouting winds. Within an hour the rain has ceased, for if these mountain storms are sudden they are swift to go. The wind has passed—while afar the thunder, like a drunken god, stumbles among the peaks. Then comes her Ladyship the Moon, serenely climbing the Western sky; flooding the dark world with light and touching the snowy heights to unearthly silver. No man will dare to tell of the mystery and wonder of a moonlit night among the mountains. Having looked upon this splendour he passes silently to his tent, leaving that "white unbroken glory, a gathered radiance, a width, a shining peace, under the night." Thus day follows day in unforgettable succession of clear and bracing joys until the holiday is over and the last day has come. It is with a sense of longing and regret that a man turns his back on the fellow-

ship of the mountains. It is like parting with friends. Yet he goes with memories that will abide through the years, and often in the long winter nights when work is done he will live again those splendid roving days amidst the freedom of the heights.

\* \* \* \* \*

“THERE’S Jasper a mile ahead!” Another hour and then back to the sights and sounds of men. It is not to be wondered at if a man should let the train slip by and for a moment stand alone looking back. These wonderful mountains!—They speak of changeless strength. They are old beyond our reckoning. They were fashioned in the unimaginable drama of creation when “the morning stars sang together and all the sons of God shouted for joy.” Age after age they have fronted the silence of immensity. They have seen glaciers form, vast rivers of ice, a thousand feet deep; through tens of thousands of years they have cradled them in mighty arms and watched them vanish away; they have echoed to the tumult and the challenge of uncounted storms when the cavalry of the clouds charged furiously and the chariots of heaven drove thunderously athwart a lurid sky “plashy with flying lightning” and yet with imperturbable strength the mountains endure and surmount “the dust o’ the moulded years.”

It is for you, reader, to go and see for yourself what no man can portray. For there is something hidden—something lost behind the ranges, lost and waiting for you, and from such a brave adventure a man comes back to duty with a new pride in this Canada of ours; a new resolve that, as for him, he will stand to the defence and the honour of this mighty inheritance.





